

Lowell B. SKINNER
 2-10-63
 x 7-3-1

ON THE AIR

'Unrewarding' Show? —Yes, but Useful

By BERNIE HARRISON

Star TV Critic

When the interview with Lowell Skinner, the Korean turncoat, was over Sunday night, (WTTG-5), there really wasn't much that anyone could say positively about this 32-year-old ex-GI, except that he was showing either the strain of his predicament or the TV experience or both.

David Schoenbrun, who was doing his first TV show since his CBS departure, admitted as much in his end-of-the-piece summary. The word he used for the interview was "unrewarding."

It was nonetheless a useful, eloquent TV show, even if understanding must be almost entirely induced from Skinner's answers. Why did he go over? Curiosity? Stubbornness? Who knows—even after listening to him explain himself?

TV newsmen who are used to articulating their thoughts easily may find it difficult to believe that there are people who express themselves so ineptly that they prefer not to answer at all. Skinner struck me as one such.

If he was really curious about other people, as he said he was, why did his principal recreation in China consist of listening to the radio with another American and drinking beer (four or five bottles) which he could have done back home in Akron? When he was through discussing his life there, we knew just as little about Chinese Communism as we knew before. Less probably.

When his (Skinner's) back is up, there is no dissuading him from a course of action, he kept reiterating, with unusual emphasis. What was he saying—and to whom?

We might have surmised almost as much from his defection as we infer from his answers, namely that he is plain-looking, seems slow on the uptake, fantastically unimaginative and, in short, a misfit, be it in Akron, the Army, or wherever-he-was, Red China. And it appears this way now, what was he like nine years ago? The TV program made this abundantly clear so that the need for interviews or analysis, which followed was almost totally unnecessary. We would have liked to have heard more from the psychologist, but he was barely under way before the program ended.

PRESS CONFERENCE ON TV AND RADIO

Today's presidential press conference will be televised live at 4 o'clock on WTOP-9. Delayed telecasts are set for 4:30 o'clock on WMAL-7 and WRC-4 and at 11:10 o'clock on WTTG-5.

Radio stations broadcasting the conference live include WRC, WOL and WWDC-FM. Rebroadcasts are set at 7 on WTOP, at 8:30 on WGMS and at 9:30 on WWDC-AM and WMAL.

to Sen. Kenneth Keating and later, to Allen Dulles.

* * *